

EDITORIAL.

IT IS REALLY a serious question how properly to make that combination known as a "biological course," a course which is becoming more and more common as an introduction to both botany and zoology. We might as well state in the outset that we do not believe in it, any more than in a common introductory course for chemistry and physics, but this has nothing to do with the present writing. Having a prevalent custom, however, the question is how to make the best of it. In the first place, we decidedly object to the continued appearance of combination laboratory guides prepared by zoologists. If botanists had the temerity to produce such books we should make the same objection. The very best of these "biological guides" lies before us, a book admirable in its spirit and in its presentation of late views, but a botanist must be well trained to keep from losing his way in the midst of the zoological terminology and atmosphere; and when the phanerogams are reached, the book breaks down entirely, and the *denouement* of the botanical story is omitted. While it may be very desirable to have a uniform terminology for plant and animal morphology, the fact remains that we do not yet possess it, and such "combination guides" introduce students to botanical literature with an uncertain and confused terminology, to say nothing of a dubious morphology. When at the last meeting of the "American Morphological Society," which, by the way, means animal morphologists, one of its most distinguished representatives presented a paper on a "Fundamental difference between animals and plants," which consisted in the fact that "animals feed typically upon solids, and plants always procure their food in a gaseous or liquid form," the idea is emphasized that there is need of a botanist when plants are being discussed.

In the second place, even if the book which treats of zoological botany be discarded, we also object to such a course being conducted by a zoologist. We should make the same objection were botanists inclined to undertake it. Any laboratory guide is useful to the student only in so far as the author has been over the ground himself and has kept abreast with the advance in knowledge. If botanical researches to-day were dealing only with the etceteras of botanical doctrine, it might be true that a zoologist could take time enough to make himself sufficiently proficient to present the fundamentals of botany. But the fact is that the researches of to-day are attacking the foundations, and the very body of botanical doctrine is being rapidly modified.